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*https://www.scribd.com/document/49573300/Justice-at-Last-The-Duplessis-Orphan-Scandal*

*It has been transcribed in full below.*

**Justice At Last? The Duplessis Orphans Scandal**

*Decades ago Catholic religious orders sold Canadian babies for adoption, slavery, and human experimentation.*

*Now these victims seek their day in court.*

*A wall of silence protected the predators while the children were sacrificed on the altar of institutional reputation.*

On November 29, 2010, attorney Jonathan Levy of Washington D.C. filed a complaint at the United Nations Human Rights Council against Canada for egregious human rights abuses. This act was the culmination of 18 years of political agitation by hundreds of victims of what has come to be known as the Duplessis orphan scandal. Those hundreds of victims also represent thousands more who could not represent themselves because they are long dead.

The submission to the UNHRC by Levy represented the first attempt to appeal for justice outside of Canada after the victims were rebuffed by government ministries, Catholic orders, and most of the media, and had exhausted every means to obtain justice within Canada.

The horrific "Duplessis orphans" scandal in Quebec is little-known outside of French Canada. From the 1930s through much of the 1960s, it involved black marketeering, enslavement, mind controlling drugs, and surgical experimentation on hundreds of thousands of French Canadian babies and children. These abuses—seemingly unthinkable in a democracy like Canada—were carried out by the Catholic religious orders that ran nearly all of Montreal's orphanages and hospitals. And it was done in collaboration with the government of Quebec and Premier Maurice Duplessis. This forever immortalized the scandal as “the Duplessis orphans.”

The scandal calls to mind another “unthinkable” controversy. During the 1950s, more than 1,000 Yemenite children disappeared in Israel. Where did they go? Most of the parents claim the authorities told t hem that their children had to be hospitalized. However, when the parents went to the hospitals, they were told their children had died, but there were no bodies at the hospitals. Some parents were shown what were purported to be graves of their children, but when those graves were legally opened,

they were found to be empty. The families claim that various organizations working in collusion with the government kidnapped the children and sold them for adoption.

After numerous protests and investigations, in 2001, a state commission of inquiry concluded a seven-year probe and concluded that the majority of the children died and some were adopted. The report rejected claims of any plot. Not surprisingly, families of the missing children were not satisfied with the report. There were persistent rumors of government involvement and cover-ups. Less than one week after the commission released its findings, Knesset members demanded yet another probe—this time with representation of the Yemenite community.

Government supporters insist the accusations are absurd. They say it would have been impossible to cover up kidnapping and trafficking 1,000 children. But is it impossible? Revelations from another scandal—the decades-long Duplessis orphans—are still coming to light.

**"Sisters of Mercy" Baby Sale**

The Catholic Church's religious orders in Quebec controlled the orphanages and hospitals and had powerful political influence. Catholic schools and other institutions were liberally funded by the state, and priests preached to their fervently religious parishioners to go only to Catholic institutions for giving birth, child services, or medical treatment. Parents were encouraged to have large families.

The Sisters of Mercy owned major Montreal hospitals including Plateau Mont-Royal, (Mercy Hospital) Hôpital Misericorde of Montreal, and small maternity homes like the Maternité Queller, the Ste.-Anne (Maternite) at 5859 Parc Ave. Montreal, and the Ste. Therese Private Hospital at 4824 St Denis.

Many thousands of babies were born in these and other Catholic controlled hospitals between the 1930s and 1950s whose mothers could not take them home because of their youth, financial insecurity, or shame. What were the hospitals to do with these babies? They found a lucrative solution that enriched their coffers with millions of dollars—a black market selling babies.

The most detailed account of this black market ring comes from Robert Carriere, a former guard at the Sisters of Mercy's Mercy Hospital. A witness to the massive trade in babies, Carriere took pictures inside and outside the hospital, and took home hundreds of discarded documents. When he retired, he wrote a book in French, Maudit Sois-Tu, Enfant Du Psois-tu, Enfant Du Péché (La Penitente) (Cursed Art Thou, Child of Sin), exposing the nuns' black market in babies and abuse of the Duplessis orphans.

Carriere claimed that the nuns sold babies from $400 to $5,000 to poor people and $3,000 to $10,000 (equivalent to $8,000–$25,000 today) to rich people. The Sisters of Mercy alone made $5 million from this business, selling 50,000 babies.

Carriere revealed tactics used to disguise the origins of the babies and how they were delivered to their adoptive parents. Since the nuns were in charge of most maternity wards, and Quebec's birth registry was run by religious authorities, it was simple to change the babies' name and religion to that of the adoptive parents.

Even when they didn't know who would be adopting the children, they still changed the name to make it impossible to trace the babies' origins. The Sisters of Mercy had an internal system: all babies born in January of an even year received the same name beginning with an A, in February, a name beginning with B, and so on. In January of an odd year, the newborns received the same name beginning with M.

At the Mercy Hospital of Montreal, young mothers not planning to keep their newborns gave birth on the third floor. The nuns immediately separated the mother from the child and sent the baby in a hand elevator down to the first floor for sorting. The babies were sorted according to their appearance. Some adoptive parents wanted blue eyes and blond hair while others wanted dark hair and skin to match the family colors. The best looking babies were sold on the international black market.

Other orphans, Carriere wrote, including deformed babies, were sent to fill the Catholic psychiatric hospitals as experimental guinea pigs, or sent to work as slave labor in church institutions or on church farms throughout the Privince of Quebec where they were often abused, tortured, chained, and whipped.

By the time the game was up in the early 70s, two employees who had worked for years at the Mercy Hospital told Carriere that the nuns put all the leftover babies in cardboard boxes and loaded them on a boat at the Quebec port or on a KLM airplane at the Dorval Airport in Montreal, headed for France.

**Jewish Families and the Montreal Baby Black Market**

The easy availability of these babies with no questions asked and no lengthy adoption procedures, made the Jewish community in New York a prime market.

The Jewish community of three-million in New York after World War II included thousands of childless couples desperate to adopt babies. However, virtually the only Jewish children available were older children whose parents had died or whose families had disintegrated.

Jewish couples willing to adopt non-Jewish babies were stymied by adoption and child placement legal provisions requiring children to be placed in adoptive families professing the same faith as their own. The result was that Catholic and Protestants had a supply of babies to choose from, while Jewish families had none.

This situation helped feed the international baby ring that operated out of Montreal from the 1930s to the 1950s. Thousands of French Canadian babies were supplied to Jewish couples—primarily in New York, but also in Florida, Los Angeles, Detroit, Cleveland, Chicago, and throughout Canada. A U.S. Children's Bureau report in 1955 stated: "Of all the black market cases that have come to light, the great majority are known to have involved Jewish couples."

One Jewish father who purchased an infant daughter in Montreal argued anonymously ("We bought a Canadian Baby," Weekend Picture Magazine, June 12, 1954) that the greatest barrier that he and his wife had to face was "the fact that we are Jewish… because there are so few Jewish babies available." Louise Wise Services, New York's only Jewish adoption agency, told him and his wife that the applications outnumbered babies twenty to one. Many Jewish couples didn't even bother applying because they knew it was hopeless.

## The Canadian Press and the Baby Black Market

The scandal first came to light when one publication denounced the black marketeering of babies in Montreal in 1950. It created a stir in Quebec but quickly died down. Then, reporter Gerard Pelletier from the Montreal newspaper *Le Devoir* picked up the story and pushed further. He received special permission to visit orphanages and psychiatric hospitals in Quebec. Between 1950 and 1953 he wrote about the atrocities happening to the Duplessis orphans and the booming black market in babies.

In the first half of 1952, the *Montreal Gazette* reported on a private baby ring that conspired to deprive mothers of their babies. Jewish lawyer Herman Buller was named and arrested, but had charges withdrawn on April 25 of that year. Throughout the next two years, more cases of baby-buying emerged.

A Brooklyn couple was stopped by a U.S. immigration officer at the Malton airport in Toronto just before boarding a plane to New York with a four-day-old baby in a meat basket. One official said that at least 30 babies were smuggled across in the past three months, and possibly 100 in the last year.

A new furor broke out again in February 1954, after the Canadian black market in babies had attracted the attention of international law enforcement. An order of 1,000 babies had been placed for childless Jewish couples in New York. The New York police got involved, and they were far tougher than their corrupt Quebec counterparts. *La Presse* (February 12, 1954) stated that the New York police had interrogated 70 Jewish families.

From 1954 to 1956, a flurry of newspaper articles from the *Montreal Gazette*, the *Toronto Globe-Mail,* and the *Toronto Star* reported on Jewish doctors and lawyers involved in the illicit baby trade. Police carried out investigations at the small private maternity clinics.

Jewish doctors and lawyers were said to be the go-betweens supplying the newborns. Dr. Rabinovitz and Dr. Leon Azoulay of Montreal and Dr. Joseph Chaikoff of Toronto were among those named in newspaper articles in the 1950s, as were attorneys Herman Butler and Louis Glazer in Montreal. The home of a Montreal construction worker called Bill Dutka, was named as one “baby farm” where babies were kept before being sold. (*Toronto Star*, Feb. 8, 1952)

## How to Buy a Child

How were the children bought? A family in New York who wished to adopt a child would contact a lawyer who referred them to a Montreal source (*Gazette*, Feb. 13, 1954). Once the baby was obtained, it would be delivered to its destination in the United States, usually by a girl courier who smuggled the child across the border by “bluffing” her way past immigration authorities. A second method was by providing the baby with a visa and passport that had been obtained by falsification of names.

The baby rings also employed young Jewish women masquerading as birth mothers who presented their children for registration as “Jewish.” Once the child was declared Jewish, the prospective Jewish parents could legally adopt the “Jewish” child through the Montreal Social Welfare court, and then apply for a Canadian passport and a U.S. entry visa for the child. Once they returned to the U.S., the transformation was complete, and the child was now a Jewish-American with a new family and a new identity.

New York police investigator Bagatta and Montreal police officer Hilda Beaucage met with attorney Glazer, and introduced themselves as Mrs. Evans and Mrs. Gordon. After examining the newborn he had for sale, Bagatta said she wanted to get a child for her cousin, named Weinberger, and it was important to know the child's identity. Glazer said he could get a rabbi to handle it.

They met the next day with a rabbi at Glazer's office. The rabbi asked Beaucage what she wanted written down about the baby's name, date and place of birth and wrote down what she said in a book. She signed her name in the book as "Anne Weinberger" and Miss Beaucage witnessed it as "Mrs. Gordon." (*Globe*, Feb. 20, 1954) This official documentation convinced potential Jewish adoptive families that they were getting a Jewish child.

Authorities believed that at least a dozen “baby mills” operated in the Montreal area. Representatives of the baby market ring approached expectant mothers several months before the babies were due. The women gave birth in private homes and were provided with physicians and proper care on condition that they gave up the babies. They were sometimes paid $40–$50 for their babies, but often received nothing. (*Globe*, Feb. 16, 1954; *Coronet*, October 1954)

U.S. Senator Estes Kefauver held several hearings on the Montreal–New York baby racket. On July 11, 1955, he interviewed a chief investigator for the New York State Commission of Investigation who reported that they were investigating the baby ring in Massachusetts, New Jersey and the east coast down to Florida.

**Baby Racket Not a Crime in Quebec**

Once the scandal became public, Premier Duplessis announced that he had been aware of the racket for some time and his department had lost no time in investigating.

After all the Senate hearings and Police investigation, authorities discovered to their chagrin that, in Quebec, baby selling was not a crime. There was no explicit law outlawing the selling of children in the Quebec provincial or federal criminal code. In 1955, only one Canadian province (Ontario) had explicit anti-baby-selling statutes.

Even though New York did have statutes against baby-selling, the selling and buying had taken place outside of the state. Legal prosecution was difficult because of differences in criminal statutes and the logistics of investigating or prosecuting crimes hundreds of thousands of miles away.

The scandal faded out in the mid 1950s, with only one or two people sitting a few months in jail. One Montreal lawyer was disbarred.

**Catholic Orders Cover-Up**

Only in recent years were the dimensions of the Quebec black market in babies discovered. R**eporter** Gary Arpin of TQS Television investigated the Duplessis orphans, and said that of the 300,000 orphans in Montreal, 200,000 were adopted or sold, and 100,000 became abused Duplessis orphans, pressed into slavery or used as guinea pigs for experimentation.

Why didn’t word of the massive baby-selling ring run by the Catholic orders and exposed by Robert Carriere reach the newspapers? Since Carriere found receipts and name lists in the hospitals for children who were given up for adoption, doesn’t this indicate that the nuns themselves sold the babies after disguising their names? Could the nuns have had two sale tracks, one through the Jewish go-betweens

and one by themselves? Was it standard policy to disguise all the babies' identities before selling the babies through intermediaries?

Did the babies bought by the Jewish couples come from the Catholic hospitals, with the private clinics just a way station, or were the babies in fact born in private maternity homes? Groups of adoptees who found each other in the late 1990s had heard from their parents or found out by themselves that they were adopted from private maternity homes instead of Catholic hospitals. It would make sense for the Catholic hospitals to cover their tracks by using middlemen to sell the children.

Could the public scandal have broken out against the Jewish doctors and lawyers because of an internal conflict between them and the hospitals supplying the babies? Could the arrests have been made to get them to toe the line? After the scandal died down, the baby-selling continued, albeit more cautiously.

If Jewish doctors sold babies only born in private maternity clinics, where did the 200,000 children who were born in Catholic hospitals and sold by the nuns go? Didn't any of them try to find their roots and trace them back to the Catholic hospitals in Montreal?

Rod Vienneau — whose wife is a Duplessis orphan who was abused for six years in a Catholic orphanage — heads the Children of the Great Darkness Committee. Vienneau claims the Catholic religious orders were behind the black market in babies, despite not a word mentioned about them in the newspapers. "The small private clinics mentioned in the Senate hearings and police investigations could not have provided more than a few thousand all told. The hundreds of thousands of babies who were sold must have come from the Catholic hospitals."

"No French Catholic mother would have given birth in private clinics belonging to lawyers or doctors or even a clinic run by Protestants," he claims. "You can't imagine the power of the Catholic Church in those days in Montreal. They had power even over the government."

"Since the 1800s, the Catholic Orders had their convents, orphanages, and hospitals all over the United States, particularly in New York, as well as Europe, South America and even Japan. The Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of Charity of Montreal, the Grey Nuns, and the Sisters of Providence were crossing the U.S. border daily, taking babies and children with them. Nobody asked any questions because the nuns represented 'holiness,' 'charity,' and 'mercy.' The Religious Orders had the best scheme in the world. Thirty-forty nuns in their dignified uniforms would board trains at the Central Station in Montreal with infant babies in their arms, and even more traveled through the Windsor station which has direct lines to New York and the New England states."

"Who do you think could sell more babies to the Jewish families, some little clinic on Esplanade that had great difficulty in crossing the U.S. border with even one baby, or the Catholic Orders who had big hospitals and orphanages on both sides and could sell thousands of Quebec babies after having falsified their identities? The Jewish families didn't even have to cross the border—the babies were brought to their doorstep."

Vienneau relates that while doing family research in the Genealogy Society of Greater Joliette, he came across old 8mm films containing thousands of birth names. He started looking for babies born in the 1930s at Mercy Hospital. He found films dating from 1936-1941, but none from 1942 onward. He inquired why these were not available and was told there was “no money to continue the project.” It seemed clear to him that names were expunged from the official records from 1924 until the early 70s because those were the years that hundreds of thousands of baby names had been falsified in preparation for the babies being sold and incarcerated in psychiatric hospitals.

“I asked many Duplessis orphans who approached me ‘What is your name?’ Vienneau says. ‘They would give me their name, and I would ask ‘Is this your real name?’ The answer I always received: ‘I don’t know, this is the name given to me by the Religious Orders.’ I could see the pain in their faces. He says there is no question that the true records were intentionally hidden away and are being kept under top security.”

**Canadian Atrocities**

Vienneau maintains that the Quebec government worked hand-in-hand with the religious orders in perpetrating the abuses and covering them up. The hundreds of hospital staff, doctors, lawyers, social workers, and couriers involved in the enslavement of and experimentation with children — crimes far greater than the sale of children — were never prosecuted. The government cover-up continues until today.

From at least 1953 until 1961, when the Bédard Commission was set up by the Quebec Department of Health to investigate the Catholic orders’ crimes, the Montreal Catholic hospitals and orphanages turned close to 100,000 defenseless babies and orphans into slaves for their institutions and farms throughout the Montreal area. Less lucky orphans were used as guinea pigs for mind control, chemical, radiation, and surgical experiments by psychiatrists and doctors.

While forcing the older orphans to do slave work for their institutions and outside farms, the nuns were paid by the government for “caring for” and educating their orphans. They only received 75 cents a day for children in an orphanage, but could make $2.25 a day if the orphans were classified as mentally ill patients. So orphanages were suddenly turned into psychiatric hospitals and sanitariums, and thousands of orphans had their files marked “mentally ill” or “insane” overnight. The government willingly obliged by accepting the sudden influx of mentally ill babies and children.

In the late 1940s, Prof. Léo-Paul Lauzon of the University of Quebec, did a study commissioned by several orphans. He found that certain institutions earned between 70 and 100 million Canadian dollars by fraudulently holding the orphans.

Tens of thousands of children not only were forced to clean and scrub for the nuns instead of attending school but were also ophysically abused by the Catholic “Sisters of Mercy.” Children were thrown down stairs, had their hands and legs broken, were given ice cold baths, beaten with chains, tied to metal bedsprings for weeks, and put in solitary confinement cells for weeks or years. Yvette Gascon was illegally interred at the St. Julien psychiatric hospital at the age of three. She spent six years in a cell for refusing to wash a nun’s socks and received 30 electroshocks.

**The CIA and the Nazis**

Catholic psychiatric hospitals carried out tests including electric shocks, injections of such drugs as chlorpromazine and LSD, chemical sterilization, and lobotomies. The top secret mind-control project MKULTRA, pioneered by CIA head Allen Welsh Dulles, was carried out at Montreal's Allan Memorial Institute on the orphans.

Many children died from the experimentation. Sylvio Albert Day, who was orphaned at birth and sent to work at hard labor outdoors as a teenager, was conscripted to do the ghastliest work inside St. Jean de Dieu hospital–transporting the bodies of the dead experimentation victims. Decades later, he testified about the surreal life in the Catholic psychiatric hospitals. He described one three-month period when he transported the bodies of 67 dead orphans–boys and girls, young men and women, some as young as five–from operating and electric shock rooms to the basement. He washed the bodies in preparation for sale to the Unviersity of Montreal and McGill University, where body parts were removed.

On one day, he was called to remove the bodies of three orphans. One of them had had his brain cut out, the other had holes drilled into his brain, and the third had hung himself in his cell. A local embalmer warned Day not to talk; otherwise, he would have "serious problems."

**Day also recalls a "Père Joseph" wearing the garb of a Catholic priest who turned up in St. Jean de Dieu hospital where Day was interned in the 1950s and 1960s. Père Joseph was one of several German-speaking doctors who worked with psychiatrist Camille Laurin, who later became Quebec's Minister of Health. When shown a picture of Dr. Josef Mengele — the Nazi "Angel of Death," Day identified him as Père Joseph.**

Another German who ran the Douglas Hospital in Montreal was Dr. Heinz Lehmann, who came from Germany in 1937, bringing with him the psychiatric drug chlorpromazine. Although he lacked medical qualifications, he was nevertheless authorized for work by Dr. Ewen Cameron of the Allan Memorial Institute, who spearheaded the diabolical experiments on the children (Ironically, Cameron, who became the President of the American Psychiatric Association in 1952, was asked for his professional evaluation of the Nazi chief, Dr. Rudolf Hess, at the Nuremberg trials.)

Thousands of experimentation victims were buried anonymously one atop another in cardboard boxes, in the "Pigsty Cemetery" behind the St. Jean de Dieu hospital. This well greased operation went on undisturbed for years, with the nuns receiving a high fee for each child they "cared" for.

**The Scandal Unravels**

In 1959, Senator Jacques Hebert of the federal government exposed in his book *Scandal de Bordeaux* that 820 Duplessis orphans were illegally held against their will in the D-Wing of the Bordeaux jail in Montreal.

Then, in 1964, Alice Poznanska, wife of Jacques Parizeau, former Premier of Quebec, revealed in Cite Libre the atrocities done to the orphans, including that the documents about them are kept "ultra secret."

In 1964, Noël Flavien was the first orphan to come out publicly and denounce the orphans' torture and brutal treatment. In 1990, one orphan, Alice Quinton, wrote of her own ordeal in the St. Julien Hospital

psychiatric hospital. Other orphans began to come out slowly. By 1992, hundreds of orphans were coming out of the closet from everywhere and being interviewed on TV.

The Quebec government ordered a police inquiry in 1992, in which 240 survivors were interviewed, and 321 criminal testimonies were deposited at the Crown Prosecutors Office.

In 1994, the Canadian government awarded $100,000 each to 71 of the most severely incapacitated victims. Another 253 patients were denied compensation. In 2004, a court overruled a previous ruling and awarded one denied Duplessis orphan $100,000. Claims by others are still pending in Canadian courts.

The Minister of Justice declared that there were no crimes committed on the Duplessis orphans. The government maintains a conspiracy of silence, lies and corruption, and obstruction of justice goes on.

As for the Church, on September 15, 1999, Cardinal Pierre Turcotte, president of the Bishops Assembly of Quebec, accompanied by his high-ranking colleagues Cardinal Jean-Claude Turcotte and Cardinal Maurice Couture, declared, “The Church does not intend to present any apologies to those who identify themselves as Duplessis orphans … this would betray the work of those who devoted their lives in service to the poorest… these children left on their own were gathered up by communities of friars and nuns who, despite their meager resources, devoted their whole life to take charge of them. Never did these communities refuse to house or feed whomsoever. Never were they inattentive to the needs of these children… the church and the religious communities set up and supported with their own hands organizations and services which hadthe goal of helping these orphans gain access to work, lodging, and social services. Direct aid to individuals was often added to this. Once having left the institutions that housed them, several of these children became adults that have succeeded in life… others unfortunately are experiencing difficulties in integrating into the work force and society. The church has already given much by means of the works it has set up… Alas, we are unable to redo history. That is why we believe that it is preferable to devote our time and energies to respond today to the needs of persons who demand our assistance.”

Cardinal Jean-Claude Turcotte, Archbishop of Montreal, said to La Presse five days later (Feb. 20, 1999): “What makes me uncomfortable with the Duplessis orphans… is that they demand apologies and financial compensations. One apologizes when one has done things one knows are bad. This is not the case with the religious communities. The orphanages were not places where one hit and abused children. I have never heard of that.”

Vienneau spent seven years researching the book he finally published in 2008: *Collusion: The Dark History of the Duplessis Orphans,* documenting hospitals involved, leading nuns, priests, doctors, and hospital directors involved in the abuse, what kinds of experimentation was done, stories of victims, government figures who gave their acquiescence to the projects, the subsequent denial of the church hierarchy and the government for the abuse and their refusal to give compensation.

Vienneau says, “Everybody makes mistakes. If the Catholic Church would have come out and made amends and repaired the damage they did, t hen maybe there could have been a healing process. But they are still denying everything when we have solid proof of the genocide they perpetrated on

thousands of Canadian children. How can we keep practicing this religion with all the crimes that the Catholic Church orders did to these defenseless children?

After 18 years of getting the runaround from Quebeca's justice institutions and lawyers, Vienneau found attorney Jonathan Levy in Washington D.C. who agreed to file a human rights complaint with the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva. It remains to be seen whether justice will be done in the lifetime of the victims.